

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4752

UNCLAS BANGKOK 10845

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN, TH

SUBJ: FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR SECOND INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

STATE PASS COMMERCE FOR MAJOR PROJECTS DIVISION

REF: A) BANGKOK 784;

B) A-129

1. DURING COURTESY CALL AMBASSADOR ASKED NEW MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT PLANS FOR SECOND AIRPORT AND MUCH DISCUSSED NEED FOR FEASIBILITY STUDY.

2. MINISTER REAFFIRMED NEED FOR SECOND AIRPORT AND SAID THAT IT WOULD BE AT NONG NGU HAO, WHERE RTG ALREADY OWNS MOST OF LAND REQUIRED. HE THEN WENT INTO SUBJECT OF FEASIBILITY STUDY AND SAID THAT INVITATIONS TO BID WOULD BE ISSUED TO QUALIFIED INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES. DID NOT INDICATE WHEN THIS STEP WOULD BE TAKEN BUT STRONGLY IMPLIED THAT HE EXPECTED IT TO TAKE PLACE BEFORE SANYA GOVERNMENT IS REPLACED, NOW BELIEVED TO BE LIKELY NEAR TURN OF YEAR. INQUIRED IF QUALIFIED AMERICAN COMPANIES MIGHT BE INTERESTED, TO WHICH IMMEDIATE ASSURANCES WERE GIVEN.

3. MINISTER THEN ASKED FOR LIST OF COMPANIES ACCOMPANIED BY SHORT DESCRIPTIVE STATEMENTS THAT WOULD PERMIT AT LEAST A PRELIMINARY JUDGEMENT. IN THIS CONNECTION, MINISTER'S SECRETARY, A PHD FROM MIT, AS IS THE MINISTER HIMSELF,
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ASKED, WITH A SUGGESTION OF DOUBT, ABOUT THE QUALIFICATIONS

OF THE NORTHROP AIRCRAFT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND WHETHER IT COULD HAVE BEEN RELIED UPON TO CARRY OUT THE ILL FATED CONTRACT IT HAD SIGNED AT ONE TIME. REPLY WAS GIVEN IN THE AFFIRMATIVE ON THE BASIS OF THE PARENT COMPANY'S BACKING, BUT SUBJECT WAS NOT PURSUED FURTHER. SAME SOURCE ALSO RAISED SUBJECT OF QUALIFIED THAIS TO PARTICIPATE IN STUDIES OF THIS TYPE. SAID THAT FOREIGN EXPERTS BROUGHT TO THAILAND FREQUENTLY TURNED OUT TO BE NO MORE QUALIFIED THAN LOCAL THAI COUNTERPART. INDICATED THAT IN HIS VIEW THE COMPANY THAT RUNS THE FEASIBILITY CONTRACT SHOULD USE QUALIFIED THAIS TO MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE. MINISTER INDICATED FULL SYMPATHY WITH THIS POINT OF VIEW.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: ALTHOUGH EMBASSY OF COURSE HAS LISTS OF AMERICAN CONSULTANT COMPANIES, MANY OF WHICH WOULD PRESUMABLY BE QUALIFIED TO BID ON FEASIBILITY STUDY, COMMERCE IS IN BETTER POSITION TO JUDGE THOSE WITH BEST QUALIFICATIONS. ACCORDINGLY, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING FROM COMMERCE ASAP LIST OF SEVERAL SUCH COMPANIES, TOGETHER WITH BRIEF SUMMARY OF THEIR REPUTATION, SIZE, AND EXPERIENCE, BELIEVED TO BE CAPABLE OF CONDUCTING THIS IMPORT STUDY.
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